



THE SAVVY CONSUMER COLUMN

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Keep your cool: Choose reliable air-conditioning repair companies

NASHVILLE, TN – Tennessee summers can be hot! For comfort and safety reasons, it is important to have a working, reliable air-conditioning unit. Scam artists know this and use the rise in the heat to take advantage of consumers by charging for unnecessary repair work.

To avoid being scammed:

- Check your air-conditioner's warranty before authorizing any repairs.
- Ask for written estimates and statements.
- Beware of ads with quoted prices that seem too cheap to be true.
- Get multiple quotes.
- Research the company and make sure the company lists a physical address.
- Never pay upfront.
- Be wary if you're told several components need to be replaced at once.
- Do not accept quotes for repairs of new units over the phone. It is impossible to know how much a new unit or repair will cost without first seeing the problem in person.
- Try to avoid having work done after hours or on weekends to avoid paying for overtime.
- Beware of ads promising free cleanings or tune-ups. This can lead to recommendations for costly repairs that are not required, high pressure to replace your unit, or significant mark-ups of the price on replacement parts.
- Be on guard for having to add refrigerant to their air unit every spring. This could be a scam. Any reputable contractor will detect a leak through a pressure test or dye, and will repair the leak. An air conditioning system should never leak refrigerant regularly.
- Always check the Division of Consumer Affairs' Buyer beware list, <http://tn.gov/consumer/buyerbeware.shtml>, to see if the company you're considering has had problems in the past. Companies most often are placed on the list for being unresponsive to complaints filed with Consumer Affairs.

To file a complaint with the Division of Consumer Affairs, visit <http://tn.gov/consumer/complaint.shtml>.

Consumer Affairs (www.tn.gov/consumer/) is a division of the Department of Commerce and Insurance (www.tn.gov/commerce/), which works to protect consumers while ensuring fair competition for industries and professionals who do business in Tennessee.
